

To: Mears, Mary[Mears.Mary@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; Richardson, RobinH[Richardson.RobinH@epa.gov]; Konkus, John[konkus.john@epa.gov]; Orquina, Jessica[Orquina.Jessica@epa.gov]
Cc: Kluesner, Dave[kluesner.dave@epa.gov]; Story, Karen[Story.Karen@epa.gov]; McCabe, Catherine[McCabe.Catherine@epa.gov]
From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Thur 9/28/2017 7:42:16 PM
Subject: RE: Special Edition Region News Clips (RA Pete Lopez)

That is great, thank you. Are you all tweeting these articles out from the Region's account? Maybe you all can flag a few top clips for Jessica to tweet out from the national account as well? Thank you – Liz

From: Mears, Mary
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:37 PM
To: Bowman, Liz <Bowman.Liz@epa.gov>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>; Richardson, RobinH <Richardson.RobinH@epa.gov>
Cc: Kluesner, Dave <kluesner.dave@epa.gov>; Story, Karen <Story.Karen@epa.gov>; McCabe, Catherine <McCabe.Catherine@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Special Edition Region News Clips (RA Pete Lopez)
Importance: High

Please find below articles that have appeared so far. We expect lots more, of course. We will collect another special edition tomorrow in the morning.

Pete Lopez to head EPA's NY, NJ region (JOURNAL NEWS; 2:44 PM)

ALBANY - Veteran New York Assemblyman Pete Lopez will lead the regional office of the Environmental Protection Agency that includes New York and New Jersey.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt announced Thursday that Lopez, a Schoharie County Republican, will take over as the agency's Region 2 administrator, giving him oversight of a sprawling area that includes the two states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Lopez succeeds Judith Enck, a longtime environmental activist in New York who served seven years in the role under President Barack Obama.

"Pete Lopez has spent nearly a decade in one of the country's largest state legislatures working to improve the quality of life of his constituents," Pruitt said in a statement.

"His familiarity with the region and his experience working to solve environmental problems in New York will be invaluable in helping EPA serve Americans in the Northeast and the

Caribbean.”

First elected in 2006, Lopez has been a member of the Assembly's Republican minority, sitting on the chamber's Environmental Conservation Committee.

He takes over the region at a time when Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands recover from hurricane damage and the environmental challenges brought on by the storm, including concerns about drinking water.

Lopez's Assembly district, which stretches from the area west of Albany to Saugerties in Ulster County, was heavily damaged by Tropical Storm Irene in 2011.

The EPA regional administrator often plays a key role in environmental issues in New York, including ongoing issues with drinking water in Hoosick Falls, north of Albany.

Enck, for example, rejected much of Gov. Andrew Cuomo's administration's plan in 2014 to use money from a loan fund for water-quality projects to help pay for projects associated with the \$4 billion Tappan Zee Bridge replacement project.

Lopez did not immediately return a call seeking comment on his appointment.

His new position does not require Senate confirmation.

The Sierra Club, a top environmental group, gave Lopez's appointment a mixed review, saying Pruitt could have "selected someone much worse than Assemblyman Lopez."

"We still have major concerns because he has a record of being pro-fracking and voted against major climate and electric vehicles bills," Jeff Tittel, the New Jersey Sierra Club's director, said in a statement. "For a Republican, he is sort of moderate, and he is better than most."

Trump administration picks new EPA chief for New Jersey and New York (BERGEN RECORD; 1:50 PM)

A New York lawmaker was tapped Thursday by the Trump administration to lead the important U.S. Environmental Protection Agency office that oversees New Jersey's leading-the-nation 114 Superfund sites.

The selection of New York Assemblyman Pete Lopez, a Republican, as EPA Region 2 administrator goes against tradition that a New Jersey resident would be chosen for the job following the seven-year tenure of New Yorker Judith Enck, an Obama appointee. The appointment usually swings between each state when there is a vacancy.

Along with New York and New Jersey, Region 2 also oversees Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, both rocked hard by hurricanes.

EPA Region 2 staff was informed of Lopez's selection in a staff-wide email Thursday morning. He starts Oct. 10.

Lopez was first elected to the Assembly in 2006 and represents an area west of Albany. He was born in Miami. His father is a native of Puerto Rico and his mother is from New York. He holds a bachelor's degree in public affairs with a minor in environmental studies, and a Master's Degree in Public Administration.

Lopez interned with the group Environmental Advocates when Enck led that organization, the Times Union of Albany reported Thursday.

Between 2012 and 2016, Lopez received ratings from Environmental Advocates between 40 percent and 70 percent based on his voting record on the environment, said Jeff Tittel, director of the New Jersey Sierra Club.

"Given the Trump Administration's war on the environment, they could have selected someone much worse than Assemblyman Lopez as EPA Region 2 Administrator," Tittel said. "We still have major concerns because he has a record of being pro-fracking and voted against major climate and electric vehicles bills"

There are a number of critical issues facing New Jersey that Lopez will have a significant role in determining.

These include:

- Will Garfield's Superfund site get the \$37 million it needs to be cleaned up? [The site is currently on an EPA waiting list for funding?](#)
- Will EPA continue to fund programs that monitor and minimize sewage overflows from old storm water systems in several New Jersey municipalities?
- Will the agency continue to support a plan to place a barrier over a large part of the Ford Superfund site in Ringwood in lieu of a full excavation?
- Will EPA uphold its \$1.38-billion dredge-and-cap plan for the polluted Passaic River despite still lobbying by dozens of polluters to make it a smaller, less-costly cleanup?
- Will EPA make the lower Hackensack River a Superfund site?

"With the abundance of contaminated sites residing in New Jersey, including the most complex in the nation at the lower Passaic River, it leaves little time to waste for the new Region 2 Administrator to get up to speed on our many environmental priorities," said Rep. Bill Pascrell Jr., D-Paterson.

A candidate for regional administrator is usually pushed by a governor or members of a state's congressional delegation.

But neither Gov. Chris Christie nor New Jersey's five Republican representatives have had much pull in Trump's administration.

The New Jerseyans closest to the president are Kellyanne Conway, his counselor, and Bill Stepien, White House political director and former Christie aide who was banished from Christie's inner circle after his name came up in the Bridgewater emails.

The EPA news release announcing Lopez taking the job had 10 quotes from people reacting to the news. Only one was from New Jersey: Bob Martin, commissioner of the state Department of Environmental Protection.

"I have had the chance to talk with Assemblyman Lopez and found that he has a strong commitment to protecting the environment, and especially, to working closely with the states and territories within his region," Martin said.

Assemblyman Lopez Picked As EPA Regional Administrator (THE HILL; 11:40 AM)

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is tapping a New York State lawmaker to lead its regional office based in New York City.

Pete Lopez's responsibilities as Region 2 administrator will include the storm-hit Caribbean territories of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as New York and New Jersey.

"Pete Lopez has spent nearly a decade in one of the country's largest state legislatures working to improve the quality of life of his constituents," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement.

"His familiarity with the region and his experience working to solve environmental problems in New York will be invaluable in helping EPA serve Americans in the Northeast and the Caribbean."

Lopez is a Republican representing an area in central New York near Albany. He has been in the assembly since 2007.

Lopez ran briefly for the U.S. House seat that former Rep. Chris Collins (R) left earlier this year, but he dropped out of the race last year.

Judith Enck, the Region 2 administrator under former President told the Times Union that Lopez is a good choice for the job.

"It's going to be a challenge to advance environmental protection policies in this

administration, but I think Pete Lopez is as good as it's going to get in this administration," she told the newspaper. "I congratulate him, and I think he'll do a good job."

Lopez is the third permanent regional leader to be picked by Pruitt. Trey Glenn is the administrator for the Southeast region based in Atlanta, and Cathy Stepp is the acting administrator for the Midwest region based in Kansas City.

Regional administrators are political positions, serving at Pruitt's pleasure. But they do not require confirmation by the Senate, unlike some of the other high-ranking EPA leaders.

Assembly GOPer Peter Lopez picked as new EPA regional administrator (ALBANY TIMES-UNION; 11:37 AM)

Assemblyman Peter Lopez, R-Schoharie County, has been selected as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's new Region 2 administrator.

Region 2 covers New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The announcement was made Thursday morning, and Lopez is slated to join the EPA Oct. 1, according to the announcement.

"Pete Lopez has spent nearly a decade in one of the country's largest state legislatures working to improve the quality of life of his constituents," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement. "His familiarity with the region and his experience working to solve environmental problems in New York will be invaluable in helping EPA serve Americans in the Northeast and the Caribbean."

Lopez did not immediately return a call requesting comment.

Schoharie assemblyman tapped as EPA regional administrator (DAILY GAZETTE)

Peter Lopez will oversee New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands

A local lawmaker has been tapped to head Region 2 of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, officials announced Thursday.

Peter Lopez, R-Schoharie, has been chosen as the EPA's new administrator for Region 2, which encompasses New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Lopez, who has spent the last decade as a state assemblyman, will oversee environmental protection efforts in those areas.

"His familiarity with the region and his experience working to solve environmental problems in New York will be invaluable in helping EPA serve

Americans in the Northeast and the Caribbean," EPA administrator Scott Pruitt said in a prepared statement.

Lopez did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the appointment. He replaces Catherine McCabe, who was serving as acting director for Region 2.

Among his first responsibilities will be responding to the fallout of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, which devastated parts of the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. Residents have struggled to establish contact with loved ones, and still lack necessary food, water and medical supplies.

He will likely lean on his experience aiding recovery efforts in the Capital Region from Tropical Storm Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, which battered Schoharie County, in particular.

On a local level, Lopez will coordinate the agency's response to PFOA water contamination in Hoosick Falls.

Peter Baynes, executive director of the New York State Conference of Mayors, said in a statement that the organization looks forward to Lopez "working collaboratively with city and village officials to protect the environment and enhance the quality of life in our communities."

Lopez's departure leaves a void in representation for the 102nd Assembly District, which includes Schoharie and Greene counties, and parts of Albany, Columbia, Ulster, Delaware and Otsego counties. It is unclear when a new assembly representative will be elected.

Karen Story

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Public Affairs Division

Public Outreach Branch

(212) 637-3128 (Direct)

(212) 637-3675 (Branch)



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